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UNCLAS LAGOS 001778

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES CLAYTON STANGER; STATE PLEASE PASS TO NOAA
BOB HOFFMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EFIS](#) [ETRD](#) [EIND](#) [PHSA](#) [SENV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: STILL FISHING FOR COMPLIANCE ON TURTLE
EXCLUDER DEVICES

1. Summary. Fishing industry leaders claim product loss from the use of turtle excluder devices (TEDs) outweighs potential gains derived from renewed trade with the U.S. Without industry support, it will be difficult for the government alone - even if it intensifies efforts beyond their current relatively passive level - to bring Nigeria into compliance with U.S. regulations on TED usage. The country's most prominent shrimp trawler promised that stricter legislation to enforce TED usage would be swift and enforceable if U.S. experts can convince the industry both that enough turtles swim in Nigerian waters to merit TEDs and that the product loss associated with TED use would not be substantial. End Summary.

Industry Claims 30 - 40 Per cent Losses Due to TEDs

3. Manjit Sadarangani, Managing Director of Atlantic Shrimpers, estimated that TEDs caused him to lose thirty to forty per cent of his catch. Sadarangani's company owns 72 vessels, approximately 25 per cent of all Nigerian-owned trawlers. Sadarangani explained that losses associated with TED usage were too high to make them palatable to local industry and, therefore, regulations requiring their use were routinely ignored.

Industry Survey Shows Turtle Population Insignificant

4. Sadarangani conducted his own survey of 25,000 trawling sessions between May and August 2004 on forty-six of his ships, not using TEDs. The captains' logs show only thirty-three turtles were caught, none leatherback, the largest smaller than 32" in diameter, and only one hauled in dead. Each trawl lasted approximately two and a half hours.

Atlantic Shrimpers Requests U.S. Assistance

5. (SBU) Sadarangani refused to divulge the results of his study to the GON who, he said, would fixate on the fact that he had not used TEDs during the period of the study and "shut down" his operations. He named both the Director and Deputy Director of the Federal Department of Fisheries, Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Unit. He implored the U.S. for assistance in verifying his results or, alternatively, to send experts to demonstrate that, if properly used, TEDs do not cause unacceptable levels of product loss. Experts estimate an average of 3-5 per cent loss from proper use of TED's, which Sadarangani said would be acceptable; whereas, 30-40 per cent is very high and therefore unacceptable. (Note. Sadarangani included large fish caught during a trawl and known to escape through TEDs as part of his estimate. End Note.)

U.S. Not a Key Export Market for Nigeria

6. Sadarangani noted that large-scale fishers in Nigeria do not see the U.S. as an extremely profitable market and that, prior to decertification, exports to the U.S. were only 1 per cent of industry proceeds. Nonetheless, he felt certain that stricter TED enforcement procedures could be legislated if government had industry backing. He boasted he had the clout to convince industry operators to use TEDs even without government regulations, but told us he was hesitant to promote a product that would take a huge cut out of a day's catch.

7. Comment. With the U.S. not a key market for Nigerian seafood exports, the certification process is not an effective tool to encourage TED use. Instead, efforts to persuade the industry that their economic interests will not be harmed by using TEDs and assistance in demonstrating the proper use of TEDs would be more effective in promoting the use of TEDs. Without successfully convincing industry leaders that TEDs will not have a disastrous impact on catch size, the GON will not be able to regulate TED use effectively. End Comment.

BROWNE